WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1   1. A method of characterizing a system, the method comprising:

2   logging outages of the system;

3   measuring one or more additional indicia associated with each outage, the one

4   or more additional indicia selected from frequency, duration and

5   business impact of the outage; and

6   calculating a Figure of Merit (FOM) based on contributions of each outage

7   weighted in accordance with the associated additional indicia.

1   2. The method of claim,

2   wherein the FOM includes a business impact weighted availability, reliability

3   or maintainability measure.

1   3. The method of claim 1,

2   wherein the FOM includes a business impact weighted server panic index.

1   4. The method of claim 1,

2   wherein the outage logging is performed on a system-wide basis.

1   5. The method of claim 1,

2   wherein the outage logging is performed for individual subsystems, services

3   and functionality of the characterized system.

1   6. The method of claim 1,

2   wherein the outage logging encodes a level of performance degradation.

1   7. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   remotely monitoring the outages and the one or more additional indicia; and

3   performing the FOM calculating off-site from the characterized system.

1   8. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   using the FOM as a factor in an employee compensation scheme.

1   9. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   evaluating a service level commitment using the FOM.

1   10. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   calculating an incentive fee using the FOM.

1   11. The method of claim 1,

2   wherein the characterized system includes an information system.

1   12. A computer program product encoded in one or more computer readable

2   media and comprising:

3   instructions executable to obtain event data for one or more monitored

4   systems;

5   instructions executable to associate elements of the event data with business

6   impacts thereof on the monitored system; and

7   instructions executable to calculate a Figure of Merit (FOM) including

8   contributions for each event data element weighted in accordance with

9   the associated business impacts.

1   13. The computer program product of claim 12,

2   wherein the event data include one or more of outages, service interruptions

3   and performance degradations of the monitored systems and individual

4   subsystems, services or functionality thereof.

1   14. The computer program product of claim 12,

2   wherein the one or more computer readable medium are selected from the set

3   of a disk, tape or other magnetic, optical, or electronic storage medium

4   and a network, wireline, wireless or other communications medium.

1   15. A monitoring system comprising:

2   an interface to event data for one or more monitored systems or subsystems;

3   means for associating elements of the event data with business impacts

4   thereof; and

5   means for calculating a Figure of Merit (FOM) including contributions for the

6   event data weighted in accordance with the associated business

7   impacts.

1   16. The monitoring system of claim 15,

2   wherein the means for calculating a Figure of Merit (FOM) includes

3   instructions executable on the monitoring system to weight

4   contributions to an availability, reliability or maintainability index in

5   accordance with the associated business impact of each event on the

6   monitored systems or subsystems.

7   17. The monitoring system of claim 15,

8   wherein the event data include incidence and duration of server panics; and

9   wherein the means for calculating a Figure of Merit (FOM) includes

10   instructions executable on the monitoring system to weight

11   contributions of each server panic to a server panic index in

12   accordance a duration thereof.

1   18. The monitoring system of claim 15, further comprising:

2   one or more state tracking tools executable on one or more of the monitored

3   systems to supply the event data.